

M.U.L.E.

Player's Guide



COMMAND SUMMARY

To load - DISK VERSION - Empty cartridge slot. Turn on your computer. On XL/XE models, hold down the OPTION key while turning the computer on and release when logo appears. Disk will load automatically.

To load - CASSETTE VERSION - Empty cartridge slot. Switch computer on whilst holding down the START button. On XL/XE models, hold down the OPTION key while turning the computer on and release when logo appears. Press play on your cassette deck, then press RETURN.

Load Notice - This program will not run with a cartridge in the system. See ATARI Owners Guide for detailed instructions.

Number of Players - 800 Models 1 - 4.

XL/XE models 1 - 2 (This is due to the XL/XE models only having 2 joystick ports).

To start

- Option - To select Beginners Standard or Tournament Version.
- Select - Choose the number of human players required. You may also choose a computer demonstration.
- Start - To enter Player Selection.
Note: Pressing joystick button skips the title cartoon.

OTHER COMMANDS

Space bar - To Freeze or Resume game play.

Option/Start - To Restart game with the same characters.

Joystick Button - To speed up computer players.

Special instructions:

At least one joystick must be used to play M.U.L.E.

During the "Development" round players may use any available joystick.

During the "Player Status" round, each product you store for next turn will be subject to spoilage. Food spoilage is 50% (one-half) of the remainder in storage. Energy spoilage is 25% (one-quarter) of the remainder. Smithore and Crystite will only spoil if there are more than 50 units in storage. Any one in excess of 50 units will go away due to spoilage.

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FRONT COVER:

Our friend, the M.U.L.E. stands for Multiple Use Labor Element. M.U.L.E.s are robots which are designed for exploring alien worlds. The design of the M.U.L.E. allows pioneers to outfit a M.U.L.E. for specific tasks. In the game, M.U.L.E.s are used on mine production facilities.

M.U.L.E.

Welcome to M.U.L.E.

M.U.L.E. is a game of exploration and resource development on another planet. Four humans can play. If you have less than four humans, the computer will play the others.

There are three versions of M.U.L.E.: Beginner's, Standard and Tournament. Each version has slightly different rules.

The player who has the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

If You Want to Start Playing Right Away

The fastest way to learn is to play the Beginner's game. The next pages of this Guide have screen shots and quick-reading captions to teach you the Beginner's game FAST.

If you have any questions, read the Questions and Answers section on page 7.

The rest of this Guide has rules and strategies for the Standard and Tournament versions.

Pausing the Game

To pause the game, see your Command Summary for the proper pause key. To start again, hit the space bar a second time. This is especially useful for playing and trying to read this Guide at the same time.

Reference Card

The Reference Card (in the package behind the disk) has details of how to boot the game disk and how to select the game version you want and the number of human players.

1. Choosing Your Character



MECHTRON **GOLLUMER** **PACKER**
BONZOID **SPHEROID**
FLAPPER **LEGGITE** **HUMANOID**

You have just chosen to be a Bonzoid.

The computer will cycle through 4 different colors. Whoever pushes his joystick button first uses that color throughout the game.

After choosing a color, you select your character. Point the joystick towards a character, and it will appear in the center of the screen. Push your joystick button to choose it. If you don't want this one, move another character into the center of the screen, and push the joystick button. When you are done, the computer will cycle through the remaining colors for the other players.

2. Summary Report



You and the other players each start with \$1000 in money and \$300 worth of Food and Energy—"goods."

3. Land Grant

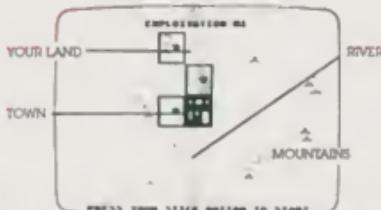


You select a plot on the river.

The Land Grant is your chance to get one free plot each turn.

When the moving square is over the plot you want, push your joystick button. The plot will be highlighted in your color.

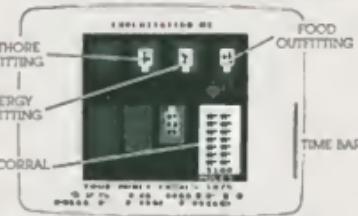
4. Deciding What to Produce



You decide to produce Food on your river land.

Your plot of land will flash when it is your turn. Decide what you want to do with your land. Mountains are best for mining Smithore, river land is best for farming for Food and flat land is best for producing Energy (See back cover for more details.)

5. Outfitting Your M.U.L.E.

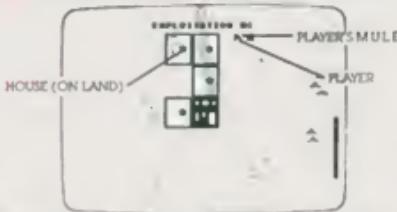


You outfit a M.U.L.E. to produce Food.

When you push your button, the town zooms into view. Go into the corral, get a M.U.L.E., and take him to any outfitting shop.

When the time bar runs out, your turn ends regardless of what you are doing.

6. Installing Your M.U.L.E.

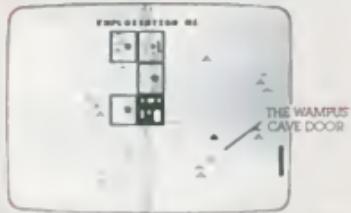


You are about to install your M.U.L.E.

To install a M.U.L.E., lead him out of town to your plot of land. Push your joystick button when your character is directly over the house. If you miss, you'll hear a beep. Try again.

When installed, your M.U.L.E. turns into a production symbol. Your property is ready to produce Food, Energy, or Smithore.

7. Wampus Hunting



You still have time left. Can you catch the Wampus?

The Wampus lives in caves in the mountains. When he opens his door, his bell rings and a light flashes. If you catch him, he will pay you to let him go.

To catch the Wampus you have to be outside of town, without a M.U.L.E. Then, when you see his light, jump on him.

Good hunting!

8. The Pub

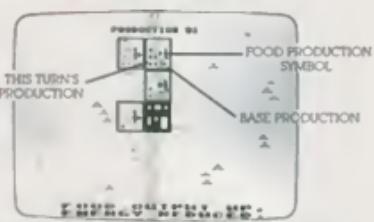
Going into the Pub is an automatic way to win money. But it also ends your turn. The more time remaining, the more you will win.

9. Random Events



You can't really plan for "random events" like Planetquakes, Acid Rain and Pest Attacks, but they happen.

10. Production



Your river land produced 5 units of Food.

Production happens automatically; you just watch your land produce. Each little box that appears on the left side of your land represents one unit.

11. The Store

There is a Store in the game, played by the computer. During the Auction, the Store buys and sells Food, Energy and Smithore.

It starts out with 16 units of Food, 16 units of Energy and no Smithore. After that, the number of units it has to sell depends on what the players buy and sell.

12. Player Status



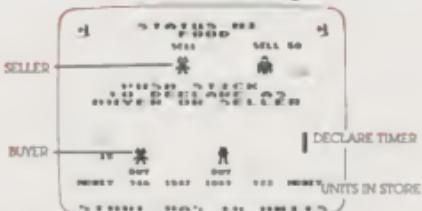
You have a surplus of Food.

There are three Auctions each round, one each for Smithore, Food and Energy. Each auction starts by showing your "Status" in that good. A line grows and shrinks to show how much you started with, how much you used, how much spoiled, and how much you produced during your last turn.

A "critical line" tells you if you have a shortage or a surplus for your next turn. (Except for Smithore, which is not "critical" for survival.)

Finally, there is a message telling how much of that product the Store has

13. Declaring



You declare yourself to be a Seller in the Food auction.

Push your joystick up or down to declare whether you are a Seller or a Buyer. You can change back and forth as often as you wish until the Declare Timer runs out.

Hint: If you have a surplus, you should sell it (your character will automatically jump to the SELL position). If you have a shortage, BUY!

14. The Auction Begins



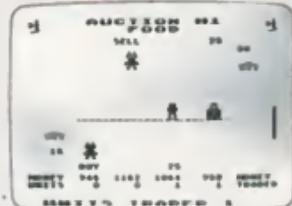
You are a Seller, and you lower your price to \$40 per unit.

The auction starts with the sellers on the top of the screen and the buyers on the bottom. Now

the units row shows the number of units traded during the auction. Instead of the number of units owned by each player.

Sellers move down to lower their prices. Buyers move up to raise their bids. Dashed lines indicate the highest bid and the lowest price among all four players. All characters can move at the same time, racing to buy and sell before the auction timer runs out.

15. Trading



You make a transaction.

When the Buy Line and the Sell Line meet, the Buyer and the Seller start flashing. Trading begins, one unit at a time. As trades are made, the Buyer's money decreases, the Seller's money increases, and both player's Units Traded increase.

Either player can stop trading at any time, simply by moving away from the line. Otherwise trading continues until the Seller runs out of extra product, or the Buyer runs out of money.

16. Summary Report (Again)

STATUS SUMMARY	
MONEY	\$ 1,000.00
BODIES	1,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,000.00
MONEY	\$ 1,000.00
BODIES	1,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,000.00
MONEY	\$ 1,000.00
BODIES	1,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,000.00
MONEY	\$ 1,000.00
BODIES	1,000.00
TOTAL	\$ 2,000.00
COLONY	0.00

PRESS ALL PLAYER BUTTONS TO GO ON

After the first turn, you are losing, but not by much.

The Summary Report shows your points, or "Net Worth," after each round. Don't feel bad if you're in last place now. The losing player gets some advantages. For instance, if you and another player both try to get the same piece of land during the Land Grant, you will get the land. And if you and another player both try to Buy or Sell at the same price, you will get to make the trade, even if he or she is also on the trading line.

17. Transferring M.U.L.E.s

Later in the game, you can move M.U.L.E.s that you have installed. You can even take them back into town and re-outfit them for a different type of production.

To transfer a M.U.L.E., go to your plot (with or without a M.U.L.E. in tow). When you press your button, the M.U.L.E. you are leading (if any) will be installed and the one previously installed will be following you. You can take the new M.U.L.E. to another plot or you can re-outfit him for a different type of production (by taking him back to town). If you have no other use for the M.U.L.E., return it to the corral for \$100.

You are now ready to play the Beginner's game of M.U.L.E. The game will last 6 rounds. Whoever has the highest value, or "Net Worth" at the end will be the winner. The "First Founder" Good luck!

Some Questions and Their Answers

Q: Why don't I always get the plot of land I want in the Land Grant?

A: It may be because you and another player are both pushing your joystick buttons at the same time, and he or she is getting the land. That happens because the computer figures out who has the least amount of money, land and goods and gives that player the land. Or else it is because your "trigger finger" is just a little too slow.

Q: Why can't I watch the computer player installing a M.U.L.E.? Is it cheating on me?

A: Since computers never make mistakes, they are boring to watch. But since they don't have any imagination, they can't catch a Wampus either.

Q: Sometimes I go into the Corral and can't get a M.U.L.E. Why not?

A: You have to go all the way into the Corral. When you do, you will see the M.U.L.E. following obediently behind you. The same goes for the outfitting shops. You have to go all the way in and come all the way out.

Q: My M.U.L.E. keeps running away. What can I do?

A: M.U.L.E.s don't really like working. If they get a chance, they will run off! If your time runs out before you get your M.U.L.E. properly installed, it will scoot. If you realize you don't have enough time to lead your M.U.L.E. all the way to your land, you can return it to the corral and get your money back.

Q: Why can't I catch the Wampus?

A: Three reasons you may be pushing your joystick button, which keeps him away. You may be

standing on his mountain, which keeps him from opening his door, or maybe you aren't really cut out to be a Wampus hunter.

Q: I get to the Buy Line just as fast as another Seller and I don't get to sell anything; what's going on?

A: Remember, the player with the least amount of money, land and goods always gets the advantage. If you are richer than the other Seller, he or she will win all the "ties." The same goes when you and another player are both trying to buy something.

Q: Yes, but can't I sell just one unit?

A: Once a trade begins, no other players can break into it. Your only hope is to get one of the players to stop trading.

Q: The Store was out of Food and I still wanted to buy some. But I couldn't quite reach the Seller. Is something wrong?

A: Nope. If the Seller doesn't want to sell you anything, he or she can just stay on the top of the screen and you can't reach.

Q: How come I can't always go as high as I want to in the Auction?

A: You can't bid if you don't have enough money.

Q: Why do I have to stop selling just because I reach my "critical level"? I could have sold Food when I didn't need it for my next turn.

A: It sounds like you're ready for the Standard Game. Turn to page 10 and check it out!

Tips on the Beginner's Game

- Always get land during the Land Grant, even if you can't get the one you want – it is worth \$500 in figuring your Net Worth.
- Avoid moving through mountains and the river whenever possible. They will slow you down. The fastest way to move is diagonally.
- Learn how to transfer and re-outfit M.U.L.E.s to take advantage of shortages and surpluses that develop.
- If you have time remaining after placing your M.U.L.E.s, look for the Wampus. If the Wampus is too far away, ignore him and go to the Pub.
- Take advantage of the terrain by producing the right products in the right place. Make food in the River, energy in the Flatlands, and mine Smithore in the Mountains (particularly plots with 3 mountain symbols).
- Always get the other players to pay the highest price when you are selling, and to take the lowest price when you are buying. Learn to "tease" them into taking your price by wiggling your character up and down on the Auction screen.
- The amount you produce each turn depends on 3 things: "Base Production," Energy, and economic bonuses. Base Production is the number of units your plot will produce if nothing else affects it. This number is shown by the number of little boxes that appear in the lower right corner of your land during Production.
- A M.U.L.E. will produce ZERO units during a turn if it doesn't have enough Energy. Food and Smithore M.U.L.E.s need one unit of Energy each turn, left over from the previous turn. (Energy M.U.L.E.s just use Energy as they make it.)
- If you have 3 plots producing the same product, regardless of where the plots are located on the map, you get an extra unit of production in each plot. This reflects what is called "the learning curve theory of production," explained in the section "Economics of M.U.L.E."
- Whenever two or more plots producing the same product are side by side, you will also get one extra unit of production in each plot. This bonus reflects the theory of "economies of scale," also explained in "Economics of M.U.L.E." No more than 1 extra unit is given for "economy of scale" regardless of how many plots are touching.
- The price of goods is based on supply and demand, also explained in "Economics." In the Status Summary, the computer values your goods according to the most recent Auction in that product.
- Cooperate with another player. To take advantage of "economies of scale" and "the learning curve" you will have to specialize your production. For example, if you produce all the food for you and another player, while he produces all the energy, you both will increase your production and profits.
- The last place player will move first if there are less than 7 M.U.L.E.s in the corral. If there are more than 7, the last place player moves last to give him the benefit of seeing what everyone else does.
- Don't lose M.U.L.E.s. If you outfit a M.U.L.E. but then realize that you don't have time to lead it to your land and install it, just take it back into the corral. You will get back the money you paid for the M.U.L.E. even though you will lose the cost of outfitting.
- Use the "handicapping" system built into M.U.L.E. to even out the players. The Flapper character is for beginners; it gets extra money and more time. The Humanoid character is for advanced players. It gets less money and less time.

The Economics of M.U.L.E.

Pricing

Prices are set by supply and demand. Prices go up when the supply is small and the demand is high; they go down when there is a large supply and little demand. For example, if there are 25 units of Smithore in the store and all the players are producing it, the store will offer a very low price to buy it.

In M.U.L.E., the store sets prices using a formula based on principles of supply and demand, and also on the latest prices paid for the product. No store price can go over \$265. Food, Energy and Smithore have minimum prices of \$15, \$10 and \$14.

Economies of Scale

The "law" of Economies of Scale says that the bigger you are, the better you get. If you double the size of your operation, you more than double your effectiveness. This is because of things like mass production, and volume discounts on buying raw materials and building tools.

In M.U.L.E., if you have two or more plots of land side by side, doing the same kind of production, your M.U.L.E.s become more efficient, and average one extra unit of production on each plot.

Learning Curve Theory of Production

In many industries, as you build more and more of a product you learn how to do it more efficiently. The "Learning Curve Theory" says that every time you double the total number of units you have ever built, you "learn" to build that product for 20% less. This is the reason that calculators and computers keep costing less and less every year.

In M.U.L.E., you get an extra unit (on each plot) for every 3 plots of land you have that are all producing the same kind of product, regardless of where they are located. This is in addition to the bonus you get from economies

of scale you get from adjacent plots.

For example, if you had 3 Smithore mines, and 2 were side by side, each mine would produce one extra unit for the Learning Curve effect, and the 2 adjacent plots would each produce a second extra unit for the Economies of Scale effect.

Diminishing Returns

Just when you thought you had it wired, economics comes through with the "law" of diminishing returns. This law says that economies of scale and learning curve effects reach a point where they get less and less important.

In M.U.L.E., you can see how this works if you try to develop a Smithore monopoly. At first you get high levels of production by locating mines in the mountains (where there are rich Smithore deposits), and getting the economics bonuses as well. Eventually you have to start mining for Smithore in the flat land to increase your economies of scale and learning curve effects. Sooner or later you reach a point where you get more value from giving up the economic bonuses and producing Food or Energy instead.

The Prisoner's Dilemma

Normally, in a free enterprise system, things work out best if everyone looks out for himself. However, there are some cases in economics, such as "The Prisoner's Dilemma," where everyone loses if each person spends too much time worrying about himself.

In M.U.L.E., if the colony doesn't survive, everyone loses. If one player is really doing poorly, he can't afford to pay high prices to buy all the Energy or Food that you are producing.

If you want a real challenge, try playing the Humanoid character against three computer players and see if you can get a total colony score of more than 100,000. If you can, we'd like to hear about it. Good luck!

Standard Game

There are several new rules in the Standard game that give you almost unlimited strategies. First, the Standard game lasts 12 turns.

Second, the entire colony must have a total worth of at least \$60,000, or you will all get sent home to work in a M.U.L.E. factory. Here are the other changes.

Land Auction

In the Standard game, the store auctions land immediately after each Land Grant. The number of plots auctioned each turn averages 1, but can vary from 0 to 6. The plot to be auctioned will be displayed by a black flashing square. After all the players press their joystick buttons, the auction begins. To bid, simply move your character up the screen above the minimum price shown. Your bid will change as you move just as it does in other auctions. When the timer runs out, the player with the highest bid (above the minimum) receives the plot. If no player moves above the minimum bid, the plot doesn't sell. The plot will be valued at \$500 in figuring your net worth during the Summary no matter how much you pay in the Auction.

Selling Land

In the Standard game you can sell your land. If it sells, you receive all the money paid for it. If the plot doesn't sell, it will not be auctioned again unless you offer it again.

To mark your land "For Sale," enter the land office without a M.U.L.E., and then go to the plot you wish to sell. When you are in the center of the plot, push your joystick button and return to the land office. To help you, the timer is turned off when you enter the land office to mark a

plot. Land marked "For Sale" will be offered in the Land Auction the next turn.

Selling land works differently than selling goods. When the Seller moves his joystick up and down to raise or lower the asking price, the price changes but the Seller doesn't move on the screen.

The Seller can change his asking price at any time. If he does this, if he moves the asking price either up or down, the Buyer's bid is automatically rejected, and he has to move above the asking price again. When time runs out the Buyer who is highest, and above the asking price, gets to buy the land. There is no maximum price

Development

In the Standard game the price of M.U.L.E.s varies from turn to turn depending on the number of M.U.L.E.s available and the number of undeveloped plots owned by players.

Each game starts with 16 M.U.L.E.s in the corral. When these are gone, they can only be replaced in one way: by building more from Smithore. It takes two units of Smithore to build a M.U.L.E., and only the store knows how. Because of the difficulty, it takes the Store an entire turn to build a M.U.L.E. from the Smithore it buys. Needless to say the prices of M.U.L.E.s and Smithore skyrocket when the colony begins to run short of M.U.L.E.s.

Another change in the Standard game: the M.U.L.E. will run away when you try to install him on your land, unless your character is directly over the house when you push your joystick button. Pushing the joystick button anywhere other than your plot will also cause the M.U.L.E. to run away.

Standard Game (cont'd)

Auction

Two changes have been made to the Auction phase. First, you can use your own judgement and sell products below your "Critical Level" if you think it is wise.

Second, when the store has no units, the selling price for a unit of any product may go as high as Buyers are willing to bid. In other words, if one player really wants something, you can make him pay for it. Because the screen is only so big, it may look as if the buyer isn't moving, when his bid price is actually rising fast; so

watch the bid price. So long as the seller does not move down from the top of the screen, no transactions are made, no matter how high the bid goes.

This allows shrewd players to take advantage of their friends.

One odd visual effect occurs if one player is bidding very high while other players stop raising their bids: the bidder doesn't seem to move anywhere and the non-bidders seem to be going backwards. The reason: it's all relative. The non-bidders last bid doesn't change, only their relative positions on the screen.

Tips on the Standard Game

- Conserve cash for the Land Auction. Land is very valuable. You should be greedy for land. Make the other players pay dearly for it.
- During each player's turn there is a 25% chance of a random event, and there are 21 different events. The losing player will never receive a bad luck event, and the winning player never gets lucky.
- In the Standard game, the production on each plot varies from turn to turn. Base Production is only the average production, and it varies from 0 to 8 units even if the M.U.L.E. has enough Energy. You might want to save a little extra Food and Energy as "safety stock" just in case you hit a streak of bad luck.
- Random events may also come up just before the Production phase. There are 8 different types. Most affect all players, but a few only affect individuals. Watch out for the Pirate, he plunders everyone's Smithore (In the Tournament game, he plunders Crystite, explained later).

■ The Standard game invites player interaction. Diplomatic and persuasive skills are often more important than knowledge. This is like life in the rest of the galaxy.

- Don't be afraid of losing a M.U.L.E. or two—especially if you have been hoarding Smithore. Remember: your opponents can't develop their land without M.U.L.E.s. And after all, it only hurts them if they're ahead of you (and their turn comes after yours). All you have to do is get a M.U.L.E. from the coral outfit him for Food, leave the town, and push your button. That M.U.L.E. will disappear faster than you can say "which way did he go?"
- Speaking of "cutthroat" play, an occasional cutthroat maneuver may put you well out of reach of the other players. For example, if you have food and the others don't, try buying out the store instead of selling the surplus. This may keep a close challenger from catching you, and next turn you may have a monopoly!

Tournament Game

The Tournament Game adds two new concepts to M.U.L.E.—Crystite and Collusion. These two small changes turn it into a game that's almost entirely new.

Crystite

Crystite, which is found underground, is the fourth product available for discovery and development. Crystite varies with underground contours, rather than terrain type like other products. In each game, there are always 3 plots which each have base production of 3 units. These centers are surrounded by plots with base production of 2 and 1. Crystite cannot be mined in the river valley, because the boggy land makes mining impossible.

There are two ways to discover Crystite. You can install a Crystite M.U.L.E. on your plot, and hope you have made a good guess, or you can take an "assay" tint.

To do this, enter the assay office in town, then visit the plot you wish to check. When you are in the center of the plot, push your joystick button to obtain a soil sample. When you take the sample back to the assay office, it will report Low (1), Medium (2), High (3), or No (0) Crystite deposits on the plot.

You may take soil samples on any plot on the map, even those that no one owns yet. However, it might be tough to find the center of a plot that isn't owned, because you won't be able to see the shape of the plot. Keep trying. You'll get it sooner or later.

Collusion



You agree to Collude in a private trade so the leading player can't buy your Food.

Collusion is a powerful technique that allows players to make private deals. When collusion is in effect in an Auction, only the players involved can trade and the others are shut out. Although the basic approach is the same, Collusion works differently in Product Auctions than in Land Auctions.

To start a Collusion during a Product Auction, two or more players push their joystick buttons at exactly the same time (To make sure that the timing is perfect, you may even have one person push BOTH the joystick buttons.) This starts a special Collusion timer, changes the color of the screen to pink, and causes the other players and the Store to fade into the background. Until time runs out, the players involved can concentrate on working out a deal between themselves. The game returns to the regular auction after collusion is over.

Collusion works differently in the Land Auction. The Seller gets to set the price and select the Buyer. No prearranged signal or special timing is necessary. Here's how it's done.

First, the Seller pushes his or her joystick button to begin the Collusion timer. The Buyer on the left will be highlighted and the others will fade into the background. That Buyer is the only one who can make a bid on your land. To select another Buyer, simply push your joystick button to select the next one on the right. Whoever you select can move his bid up or down, while you, at the same time, raise or lower your price. (Notice that the house does not move on the screen, but the price changes nevertheless.) As soon as the Buyer meets your price, he or she gets the land. If Collusion timer runs out before anyone meets your asking price, the game returns to the normal Auction. Don't forget, if the Buyer you select isn't going to meet your price, you can always shut him off and "activate" another Buyer.

Tips on the Tournament Game

- The Tournament game starts with just enough resources to keep the Colony alive for one turn. You also get less time during the Development phase to place M.U.L.E.s on your plots. A good way to offset these changes is to be self-sufficient during the beginning of the game. Try to get one of the River plots for Food, and occasionally take an Energy plot next to the Food plot you have made. These two plots will probably keep you going through the first 3-5 turns of the game.
- Crystile prices vary from \$50 to \$150 per unit, but are not affected by supply and demand on the planet. The way to make a killing on Crystile is to buy it cheap and sell it when it gets to its highest peak.
- In the early stages of the game, look for Crystile by assessing plots if you have extra time. You should look for Crystile in preference over hunting Wampuses. The best way to earn enough cash to stay flexible is by speculating on Crystile. If you can find and obtain the richest Crystile plots you will be well ahead toward winning the game.
- Speaking of Crystile, it is better to group plots together around a low or medium producing plot than to go for the plots with high concentration. By taking advantage of "the learning curve" and "economies of scale" you can produce much more Crystile than by going for the high concentrations and scattering your land holdings.
- Don't be shy about transferring and re-outfitting M.U.L.E.s, particularly toward the end of the game. Victory can often be pulled out during the last 1-3 turns by swiftly converting all of your plots to the product selling at the highest price (usually Crystile). Build up a surplus of Food and Energy (particularly Energy) for the last turns, then go for it!
- Trade Land by using Collusion! If you can talk one of the other players into trading a plot you need, work a private deal through Collusion. If you are skillful at negotiation, you should be able to make deals that are good for both of you. For example, you can greatly enhance your standing just by getting a key plot (particularly a plot which connects several other plots you already own).
- The Pirate Ship is very dangerous in the Tournament game. No more than 2 Pirate Ships ever arrive during a game. If, for example, no Pirate ship has arrived, it is turn 9, and you have 50 units of Crystile in storage. SELL!
- Watch for the "Fire in Store" special event. When it happens, the price of products will increase, particularly Smithore if M.U.L.E.s are scarce.
- The computer player(s) in the Tournament game receive an extra \$200 to offset your superior play. Try playing the Humanoid (advanced) character against the computer. You will be hard pressed to beat him!

About the Authors

The authors of M U L E. have spent over 3500 hours writing and playing this game. Here are some of their secrets.

DAN BUNTER. I like to win by analyzing my options.

When I am bidding in a land auction I use a little "rule of thumb" to determine how much a plot is worth. Multiply the number of turns left by 100 and add 500. This will give you the maximum bid you should make on any piece of property. In other words, bid high for land early in the game, even though you don't have much cash, but don't get sucked into a bidding battle later in the game just because you have lots of money.

If you want to get really sophisticated, figure out what product you will develop on the land, then figure out how many units you'll average, and how much it will sell for. Multiply that by the number of turns left and add it to 500.

This is how the computer player figures the value of each plot of land. But if you're like me, you won't be able to complete the full calculation before the auction is over.

ALAN WATSON. Despite my experience with M U L E., I have more ideas about how to play than about how to win. The way I play is conservative, and so I seldom win by a wide margin. It seems I need more than my share of property (11 plots) to win. So I try to get as much land as I can. Even so, I try to get adjacent plots to take advantage of economies of scale. Unless food prices are high (over \$100), I try to convert all my Food M U L E.s to Smithore or Crystile by the tenth turn. I also try to stockpile energy by then so I can convert my Energy M U L E.s too.

If I am behind, I always ask for advice. The suggestions don't always help, but they are usually good for a few chuckles that keep me interested.

Finally, a few short tips:

- The best way out of an outfitting shop is a downward-diagonal pull of the stick and then slide sideways.
- The fastest way to get to the center of town is to enter from the top or the bottom.
- If you play with someone who wins all the time (or the computer), try to figure out what they're doing.

JIM RUSHING. I always try to make prudent and logical decisions throughout the game, especially in the early turns. You may never recover from an early mistake like missing a land grant, not becoming self-sufficient in Food and Energy, or not leveraging every penny of excess cash.

Unless I capture a decisive advantage early in the game, I usually find myself in a dangerously vulnerable position. Then I have to use all my wits and cunning just to survive. I can often appeal to Alan's sympathetic nature and convince him to sell me one or two units of a needed commodity, but all I ever hear from Dan or Bill is something like, "You want it, let's see that price up to \$300." Totally ruthless.

One bit of advice: if you just happen to find yourself in a winning position, and in possession of the only surplus Energy in the colony, pause for just a moment to remember all those times when the other players have helped you out, reflect on all those times that they showed pity on you and kept you alive; think about the good of the entire colony...and then, DON'T SELL.

About the Authors (cont'd)

BILL BUNTER. My advice is: play to win.

As the game begins, get into Smithore. Grab a mountain plot next to the river. Immediately yell that you missed the river, and mumble about the need for Food production. Usually that will convince at least two of the others to buy river land and develop Food.

Then don't sell Smithore to the store. You want demand to go up and the store's supply to go down. When the others start to notice, coast another turn by cursing your joystick for "inadvertently" flopping you to a Buyer when you were trying to be a Seller. By the next turn, they'll be getting suspicious, and they'll start selling all their Smithore to keep the price down. Play possum. Wait until they're almost to the store and then step a dollar above the store price and buy all the Smithore that you can. The cat's out now, and everyone's on to you.

So next turn—don't develop at all—let MULEs free. Grab one, outfit it for food, step out of the town and push your button. If you're quick you can set at least four free. Smithore's price should jump to over \$200. You just acquired leverage. Sell all your Smithore at the next auction. And remember, there are drawbacks to being the winning player—you always lose ties in the auction. So, if you and another player both need Food or Energy, and you're winning, you must be conniving. Right before the auction starts, turn to him and make a chuckle like you just made a mistake. Make strong eye-contact and start explaining. By the time he realizes that the auction has started, you'll have that little jump. So buy all the product you need, and, for good measure, buy up any that he needed, too.



(Food Symbol) Food determines the amount of time you have during Development. Average production for food in the River Valley is 4, in the Flatlands 2, and in Mountains 1. Food prices range from \$15 to \$250. The outfitting cost for a food producing M.U.L.E. is \$25.



(Energy Symbol): Energy is used in the production of all products except Energy itself! The amount you need is based on the number of non-energy plots with M.U.L.E.s plus 1. Average production of Energy in Flatlands is 3, in the River Valley is 2, and in Mountains 1. Energy prices range from \$10 to \$250. The outfitting cost for an energy producing M.U.L.E. is \$50.



(Smithore Symbol): Smithore is used in the production of M.U.L.E.s in the Standard and Tournament games. The store will produce 1 M.U.L.E. for every 2 Smithore units it buys from players. Average production of Smithore in the Flatlands is 1, in the River Valley is 0 (you may not mine Crystile or Smithore in the River Valley), and in the Mountains 1 plus the number of mountain symbols in your plot (1 to 3 mountain symbols). In the Beginner's game Smithore has a fixed price of \$50. In other games Smithore prices range from \$25 to \$250. The outfitting cost for a Smithore producing M.U.L.E. is \$75.



(Crystile Symbol): Crystile can only be found when playing the Tournament game. All Crystile found is shipped off planet. Please refer to the Tournament game instructions for the locations of Crystile. Crystile prices range from \$50 to \$150. The outfitting cost for a Crystile producing M.U.L.E. is \$100.